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FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT

A Life Sketch by

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From Darkness to Light

by

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REV. T. TSUCHIYAMA AND FAMILY AND HIS WIFE'S PARENTS AND HIS SISTER

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INTRODUCTION

Christianity is seen at its best when through the power of the Gospel heathen men and women are delivered from their idols and heathen practises and are brought into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

During the past few years it has been my privilege to be closely associated with this gifted Japanese man. He is a peer among his fellows. As a Christian he is humble, devoted and spiritual. As a preacher, evangelist, writer and educator he stands high among the Protestant leaders of Japan.

This simple story shows what a Japanese boy, who was a stranger in a strange land, accomplished for himself and for the world. Discouragements, poverty and opposing influences were nothing to him and were met with a fortitude that admitted no defeat.

What he has done certainly our boys and girls in America can do and should do.

"From Darkness to Light" was published ten years ago as a pamphlet and has now been revised and brought down to date. It should have a wide sale throughout the church, and especially among the young people's societies.

William B. Olmstead,
Missionary Secretary.

I

RAISED A BUDDHIST

My parents were firm believers in the Buddhist religion. They were very sincere worshipers of the national gods and their religion was an important factor in their lives. I was brought up under the tender care and the sweet influence of such an earnest and devoted Buddhist family. The very first recollection of my early childhood is a pilgrimage to the shrine of my patron god, to whom my parents presented me in order to return thanks. As there was no railroad at that time, they went on foot, carrying me on their backs, in turn, during the long journey.

The following account of my birth and early life was related to me by my parents. No children had been born to them for many years, and they were

praying to a "god of children" that he would give them one. When I was born, their joy was very great for they fully believed their prayer was answered. But in the midst of their joy there came to them a great sorrow. When I was about two years old, one day while I was playing with other children suddenly I fainted. Several doctors were called, but they gave me up to die, for my body was already cold. In their distress my mother began to pray to the same god as her only helper in this dark hour. Although I was unconscious for a few hours, my life was restored after her earnest prayer. The joy of my parents must have been very great. Soon my mother promised this god, in whom she had strong faith as the healer of her child as well as its giver, that in order to return her thanks to him, she would fast on two sacred days, the first and fifteenth of every month, and would not eat chicken or eggs, which are said to be sacred

things to that god, until I was twenty years of age. For my sake she kept her promise for eighteen or nineteen years and thoroughly completed her sacred vow with her thankful and devoted heart.

The happy days of my early childhood were spent under shades of sacred plum trees in the shrine of my native town, which was surrounded on one side by a lovely thick bamboo grove, and on the other by a beautiful little brook which ran into a sacred pond where I often bathed merrily under shades of pretty lotus flowers. At home it was a daily custom to worship Buddha and many national gods, burning candles and incense and offering various sacrifices to their images at the family altar. My parents used to take me very frequently to visit famous temples and shrines, and I was greatly impressed with the grand old structures and the magnificent images of the heathen deities. Thus was the spirit of de-

votion and reverence breathed into my heart from my early days.

Although my parents were strong believers in Buddha and many gods, they bitterly opposed Christianity, which has been greatly misunderstood by many Japanese for the past two centuries since the introduction of Catholicism under the Jesuit sect. During my boyhood no Protestant missionaries visited us, but some Roman Catholic nuns used to come to my native town, once or twice a year, to seek for poor orphans. While they stayed, all the children of the town were so afraid of them that they did not go out of their homes in the evening. From that time, the word "Yaso," which means "Jesus," was very dreadful to me. Under such environment, naturally I came to hate Christianity and to have a strong prejudice against it. "I am the Lord, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me" (Isa. 45:5).

II

GOING TO AMERICA

After my graduation from the "Chugakko" (the secondary school) in the city of Kumamoto, the center of Kushu Island, I went to Tokyo to enter college, with a strong desire to become an educator, to encourage moral education based upon the teaching of Confucius, to make men and women of strong character who would be the builders of the future Japan.

I went to Tokyo about the time of the glorious victory of the Japanese army and navy at Port Arthur. At the height of the great triumph of the Sunrise Empire over Russia, all the young men were intoxicated with an ambition to accomplish some great tasks for the sake of their fatherland. While I was studying I read about the favorable

conditions in America, and my heart was soon kindled with a new ambition to go to that country, not to study, not to seek Christianity, but for the purpose of going into business and becoming a rich man. With this determination in mind I left my beautiful native land in the month of August, 1905, making a vow at the farewell meeting that I would never see the faces of my dear ones again unless I should accomplish some great task in America.

The night before I left home all of the family gathered together and talked until very late. Then my precious mother said to me, "Dear son, tomorrow morning you are to leave home for America, a Christian country, but you must neve become a Christian. If you become converted, you will be disloyal not only to your parents, but to your ancestors who kept their strong faith in Buddha and the national gods." Giving me a little bag which contained some amulets, representing gods, she

said, "Keep this bag in your bosom wherever you may go that these gods may keep you away from danger and may help you in time of need." Then, gladly receiving her advice, I made reply to her, "I will never become a Christian, mother, although I go to the Christian land, for I hate Christianity very much."

As soon as I arrived in America I went to a place near Los Angeles where a relative had succeeded as a pioneer in strawberry growing and where there was a good opportunity for me to start in the same business. While I was endeavoring to decide what course to pursue I was taken ill and was obliged to enter a hospital for nearly a month. Soon after leaving the hospital I suffered from blood poisoning for another month. At this time of distress my heart was filled with disappointment and loneliness in this strange country.

III

INSPIRATION OF THE MORNING

In December, 1906, leaving Los Angeles, I went to Pasadena and entered high school. Here I had various experiences, meeting not only the difficulty of learning the English language, but also undergoing a severe struggle in an effort to support myself while attending school. For a few months I worked in a store, getting up every morning at four o'clock, in order to finish the work before the school hour. When I went to work I used to see no one on the street except a few newspaper boys whom I could not help but sympathize with for their circumstances seemed to be very similar to mine.

One winter morning when I was going to work as usual indulging in a deep contemplation about my future,

suddenly I was moved by an indescribable inspiration. As I looked up toward the eastern sky, the morning star appeared to me very much brighter than ever before and recalled to memory a short Japanese poem which I had learned at a primary school but had not thought of for many years:

"O thou Brooklet, soon to be mighty seas,
Creepest awhile merrily beneath th' leaves."

After this experience my determination was strong to endure all trials and difficulties until I should accomplish my purpose. Thereafter I wrote that poem on the front page of each book so as to remember the inspiration, and very often my heart was encouraged in times of severe testing. "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined" (Isa. 9:2).

IV

MY CONVERSION

Shortly after the experience of that morning there came to me a great question, "What is life?" to which I never had previously paid careful attention. Every day I asked myself, "Why did I come to this world, and what will be the end of my life?" When I retired at night from the busy activity of the day, there used to come to my heart indescribable loneliness and agony. Separation, sorrow, suffering, and finally death—all these dark thoughts filled my heart, and there seemed to be no bright hope of the future life. No longer could my lonely heart be satisfied with the philosophical idea of the pantheistic gods of Buddhism and the mere moral teachings of Confucianism with which I had been very familiar since my childhood.

After the severe inner struggle with the problem of life, and having failed to solve it with heathen teachings, finally I began to seek light in the Holy Bible which I had rejected for a long time. When I studied it with my hungry heart, it became very interesting and sweet to my soul. "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God" (Psalm 42:1, 2). My difficult problem was easily solved when I read the following words of Jesus in John 3:16: "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life"; and in John 6:35, "I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst."

When I found in the Bible that there was eternal life, a new, bright hope began to enlighten my wearied soul which

became very hungry for that life. The light of God shone upon my pathway, and the tender voice of Jesus drew me closer to Him. But as the possessions of the rich young ruler, in the eighteenth chapter of Luke, were in his way, so my promise to my mother, never to become a Christian, was in my way, for if I decided to follow Jesus, I would be separated from my home and would become a disobedient son. If I was obedient to my parents, I could not be a faithful follower of the Master. For nearly one month I did not know what to do, and my heart was greatly troubled. One night when I was praying God led me to read Mark 10: 29, 30, "Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, but he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecu-

tions; and in the world to come eternal life"; and also Matt. 10: 37-39, "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it."

When I read these precious words of Jesus, my soul was greatly encouraged and I was soon determined to give up all, even my father and mother, for the sake of His gospel. On the twelfth of April, 1908, at an evening service of a little Japanese mission, I stood up to confess Christ as my Savior. But my limbs began to tremble and my heart to throb, and my lips became so tightened that it was difficult to speak, for I began to think of my home again. In silent prayer I asked Jesus for His strength. As soon as I bid farewell to my parents and fully accepted Christ

as my Savior, making a public confession before friends, all suffering, doubts and agonies were taken away, and sweet joy, peace and rest at once came into my heart. Oh, never can I forget that evening, when Jesus came into my heart and saved me from sin, and brought me "from darkness to light." Read Acts 26: 18.

Although I hesitated for a few days, yet I could not help but write home about my conversion, for I soon began to bear a heavy burden for all of my dear ones and I wished to see them saved also and filled with joy. With earnest prayer I wrote home a long letter of about twenty pages, telling what were the teachings of Christianity, why I was converted, and how happy I had become since I was saved. Their answer surprised me, for I found that they could understand by my letter that Christianity was a good religion and they were glad to hear that I was trying to live a sincere life in Christ, al-

though they could not yet fully embrace the new religion. The joy of my soul at that time can never be expressed with my poor pen. After that I wrote to all of my relatives about the precious gospel of Christ, and I never ceased my prayer for them that they might be brought into His kingdom.

"Once I was blind, but now I can see:
Sweetly the Light has dawned upon me,
Come to the Light, 'tis shining for thee,
The Light of the world is Jesus."

V

TRIALS

Soon after my conversion I had many financial difficulties. For two or three months I was obliged to live on crackers and water and only occasionally on ten cent meals. I mended my shoes with thick cardboard which soon became wet when it rained. The noon time is one of the most pleasant hours for many students, but while they were enjoying their lunch prepared by their mothers, often I had nothing to eat and I stayed alone in the class-room praying unto God for His help. One day I felt so hungry that I was about to faint and fall down the stairs of the high school. At such difficult times, how often the devil tempted my soul, but the inspiration of that morning was so great an encouragement that I deter-

mined not to be absent even a day from the school work though I might starve. These precious words of Jesus were a blessing to me, "Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. * * * Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:25, 32, 33). The sweet communion with my heavenly Father at the corner of the class-room at such severe testing times can never be forgotten. I had nothing to murmur about, and my sincere prayer was, "May Thy will be done!" How often my soul was satisfied with the heavenly manna!

During the following summer vacation I received many blessed experiences, one of which I will relate.

In the summer of 1908, when there was a financial panic in this country, it

was very difficult for me, an inexperienced school boy, to find work. Finally through the kindness of a friend, I obtained employment at a large cafeteria, washing glasses. It was new work for me and on the third morning my hands were so swollen that I could not move them. But if I did not keep at work I could not go to school the next fall, for two months of the vacation were already gone. Without knowing what to do I knelt at my bedside and prayed to my heavenly Father. In my prayer I very distinctly heard His precious voice saying, "Go, be ye not discouraged." Being greatly encouraged by His word, I went to the cafeteria and started my work with my swollen hands, praising God and trusting all to Him. While I was working I forgot my pain, and I felt as if a great multitude of holy angels were present helping me in my difficult task. When the day's work was done the proprietor came and, after examining some of the

glasses, said that I had done my work so well that he would increase my wages. Without the help of God I could never have overcome the difficulty. All things are, indeed, possible to Him. Thanks to the Lord, our God, forever!

Later I found work in a good Christian home in Pasadena where I stayed for three years, until I finished the high school. The family was so kind to me that I felt as if I were at my own home. Under their sweet Christian influence my faith was firmly established upon the teachings of Jesus, in spite of some dangers of the Unitarian thought in the mission at that time.

VI

MY CALL TO THE MINISTRY

During the winter of 1908, one night there was held a special evangelistic meeting in the Japanese mission, and a man who was a keeper of a boarding house and a pool room requested the congregation to pray for him. This touched my heart very much, and I began to realize what a great privilege it was to help lost souls to find the Lord.

A few days later when I was counting my many blessings of the past year and was also thinking of the condition of the dying world, I was seized with a peculiar feeling. While praying I heard very clearly the call of God to give up my life for His work. I never had thought of becoming a preacher, but when I remembered what God had done for me I could not resist His call,

and I consecrated myself for His work, giving up all my plans and worldly ambitions. I soon found that there was no greater joy than to minister to hungry hearts. The words of Jesus always breathed the spirit of missions into my soul, "Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together" (John 4:35, 36).

VII

THE DEEPER EXPERIENCE

After I was graduated from the high school in 1911, my next great problem was the choice of a college. Leaving Pasadena I entered a certain school which was strongly recommended as being one of the best Christian colleges on the Pacific Coast. If I had desired to pursue my studies only, I would have been quite well satisfied there. Four years of college life, however, were too precious to me to spend merely in obtaining an intellectual education. My desire to go to a Christian college was to build up my Christian character under a strong spiritual influence as a preparation for my future ministry. When I went there with such a desire and expectation, I was greatly surprised to find conditions unfavor-

able to the development of the moral and spiritual life. I often said to myself, Is there no college in this Christian country which will satisfy my desire? Are all Christian colleges corrupted like this one?

At this time I heard very favorably about the Nazarene University in Pasadena. But when I visited it and found only temporary buildings and a small student body, it greatly disappointed me. Yet at the chapel service the spiritual atmosphere made such an impression on me that I decided to move to this university, in order to obtain a deeper spiritual experience. This I did in spite of the opposition and severe ridicule of many of my friends who did not know my longing for a deeper work of grace in my heart.

On Sunday morning, November 26, 1911, when I was kneeling at the altar of the university church, seeking for a deeper experience, the blessed Holy Spirit sanctified me from all sin, filling

my heart with perfect love. I felt as if I were in an entirely different universe. All surrounding nature seemed to be joyfully praising the Lord, the Creator. After this blessed experience my spiritual life was wonderfully changed, and ever since "the love of Christ constraineth" me (2 Cor. 5:14).

For five years, the university and university church were a great blessing to my soul. The Christian atmosphere and intensely burning missionary zeal under the leadership of our beloved president, and the divine, fiery messages of our dear pastor, from Sunday to Sunday, made a lasting impression upon my life. A most wonderful revival in 1914 gave me a clearer understanding of the mighty working of the blessed Holy Spirit. That sacred altar of the former university church was stained by many tears of joy and thanksgiving of hundreds of souls and can never leave my memory.

VIII

OPPOSITION

When my parents and relatives found out that I was preparing for the ministry, there came from them strong opposition. One of my close relatives in Japan was so disappointed in me that he never wrote me for five years, although freqently I wrote him very kindly. In 1912, I heard from my brother at home that he had also given his heart to Jesus. For nearly six years I had been praying for his conversion and writing him about the wonderful salvation of Christ. Certainly God never forgets our prayer. But after his conversion the opposition of my relatives reached its height. My father wrote me, "When you became a Christian we were all very glad, but to become a minister is too much. If you

come home as a minister, we will be ashamed of you, for all our community believe in Buddha and the national gods and they hate Christianity. Since your relatives have found out your plan for the ministry, they have begun to hate even us, your parents. Your brother is going to college next year, but my financial condition makes it almost impossible to send him there. If he had not become a Christian and you were not preparing for the ministry, some of our relatives would be very glad to support him. What will you do about him? Will you change your plan for something else, not only for the sake of your future, but also for the sake of your brother and the whole family? If you do not change your mind, be sure that we will take the final step."

After the opposition of five years I received this final appeal and notice that I might be cut off from the family tie, if I did not change my purpose. But

how could I break my vow to God who had done so much for me! During this great trial I used to go out every morning and evening to the grove behind our university and spend much time in prayer, in order that I might know the will of God and how to answer my father's last letter. Sometimes the clouds were very dark and nearly obscured the light of my soul, but one evening when I was praying, God spoke to me very clearly, "Be not afraid of anything, for I am with you always. Write home and tell them that you cannot change your purpose." This I did at once. I now felt it my duty to support my brother so he would not become discouraged, and I was praying for work for the summer vacation. For three summers I had served as a cook's helper at the Y. M. C. A. camp, but this year I was asked to take the cook's place. My prayer was answered. I sent my father one-half of what I earned toward my brother's college expenses. I told my

father that if necessary I would give up my college work for a year and support my brother, but that I could never change my promise to God to be a minister even though all of my dear ones should forsake me.

This letter was sent with many prayers. When the reply came my parents said, "For many years we have opposed you because we loved you and sincerely hoped that you would not make a mistake in choosing your life work. We thought that you would never be happy and satisfied if you became a preacher. But we have now found a new spirit by your last letter. We know the money which you earned is necessary for your own college expense, but you are willing to share it with your brother. This certainly must be the spirit of Christianity. We have found that the time has already come in Japan for us to accept Christianity. We will not oppose you longer, and we hope you will be thoroughly prepared

for your future ministry before you come home." About the same time, my relative who had not written for five years began to write me very kindly. I cannot express how happy I was when my prayer was heard and answered. My mother, who had been sick for several years and who desired to see me very much, wrote urging me to remain and complete my theological course before coming home. Many of my relatives were attending Christian services. The opposition was all gone. At that time I had strong faith in God that He would save my whole family. What a joy to worship the true and living God instead of bowing before idols.

IX

WINNING SOULS

Since I received the call and the heavenly vision, it has been my great delight to help hungry souls. While I was at the Nazarene University God blessed my soul in helping many seekers at the altar. During my college life I was very busy and could not go out to preach as often as I wished. But I never missed the opportunity given, going out from Sunday to Sunday, even when I was worn out with my heavy study and work. During these years there were many interesting experiences, but I will relate only one.

For seven summers, during the vacation, I went to the Y. M. C. A. summer camp in Santa Catalina Island, California, to work. The camp was situated on a beautiful shore of the island, sur-

rounded by mountains on three sides, and five miles away from any inhabited place. It was an ideal place for training boys under the influence of the beauties of nature and a Christian atmosphere. Going to such a place my desire was not only to cook for the hungry boys, but also to prepare some spiritual food for their souls. Every summer God wonderfully helped me to bring many of them to the Savior. Whenever I had time I tried to talk to them about their souls.

One Sunday evening the secretary asked me to speak to the boys at the camp-fire about my Christian experience. After a blessed meeting many boys, with tears, came to me to shake hands, and one of the leaders asked me to go to his tent and pray for them before they retired. When I went I saw about eight bright boys who were eagerly awaiting me. I said to them, "Boys, are you all Christians?" Some answered, "Yes, I am a Christian,"

and others, "Yes, I am a member of the church." Then seriously I asked them, "Boys, do you believe that your sins are forgiven? Are you walking in the light of God every day? Only to join a church is not to be a Christian." To this second question none of the boys answered. Soon a great burden came to my heart and I knelt down and prayed for them. During my prayer one of them who was about seventeen years old began to cry and said to me, "I have a bad habit of smoking, and I have no strength to resist the many temptations which are around me. To-night I want to give up all bad habits and start a good Christian life." Meanwhile, other boys were also convicted and began to shed tears. After a severe battle against the power of Satan, they all truly gave their hearts to Jesus and received the blessed assurance of salvation.

The next afternoon I visited several tents and in one I saw three boys play-

ing. I took them upon a hill and talked to them about their souls. But they did not pay any attention and laughed at me, even while I was praying for them. As I left them I asked them to spend that afternoon in Bible study and prayer. When my work was done one of the three came with his leader who said to me, "This boy felt very sorry that he laughed at you, while you were so kindly praying for him and his friends. He asked me to come and apologize to you for what he had done this afternoon." How glad my heart was to hear it! I took the boy's hand and, as tears rolled down his cheeks, we knelt in the dining-room and prayed. He gave his heart to Jesus. Glory be to His precious name!

The same evening a few boys came to my tent, requesting me to pray for the salvation of their souls. While I was reading the Bible more came in, among whom was another one of the three who laughed at me. When we, about ten in

all, were praying in my little tent upon the hill, the blessing of God came upon us and each heart was melted. Meanwhile, a high school teacher, one of the leaders, came in and joined in our prayer. My Japanese assistant who was also saved under my ministry was greatly blessed and earnestly prayed for these souls. At half-past eleven glorious victory came down and all these boys received the definite experience of salvation. Then the testimonies began. The heavenly glory wonderfully illuminated all their faces upon which tears of joy and thanksgiving were rolling down. The next morning, on the last day of the camp, one boy brought his friend to the kitchen and said to me, "My friend wants to be saved before he goes home to see his mother. Will you have time to pray for him?" I took them to my tent and prayed. As soon as this boy received the blessing three more came in and made the same request, and they were

saved, too. That afternoon all those boys went home with the great joy of salvation which they did not have when they came to the camp.

There is no distinction between nationalities. All are equal before God who sent His only begotten Son to save all mankind. I am very thankful for the blessed privilege of preaching the gospel, and also for the many souls which He has given me, not only Japanese but Americans, some of whom have already crossed the waters and are preaching the blessed story of Jesus in dark heathen countries. There is no greater service that we can perform than to win souls for the glory of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

X

FURTHER PREPARATION

In 1916, I left Pasadena and went to the Drew Theological Seminary to take a three years' theological course. From this seminary many workers have gone forth to all parts of the world to preach the blessed gospel of our Savior. Here I received many blessed experiences in the new associations with the professors and students. But above all the beautiful Drew forest has been a great inspiration to my soul. The quiet communion at night, alone with my heavenly Father in this wonderful forest, will never be forgotten. How many times God blessed my soul showing me clearer than ever before the blessed heavenly vision.

While I was in southern California, by a peculiar providence of God, I be-

came acquainted with the Free Methodist people and frequently had glorious and blessed times with them. They were very much interested in me and were praying that God would send me to the city of Osaka, Japan, to take charge of the Bible Training School which was being carried on under the Free Methodist Missionary Board. But the city of Osaka had no attractions for me and I very much disliked to go there. In 1917 I united with the Free Methodist Church, and about that time I reluctantly consented to go to Osaka after my graduation from the Drew Theological Seminary the following year.

During the Christmas vacation one of the professors offered me a fellowship which would enable me to take advanced work for one year in any institution which I might choose. This was urged upon me, and there came to my heart a great struggle. On one side I could see a vision of honor, position and

money. But on the other side I could hear the still, small voice of God saying, "Give up all and go back to Japan." While I was struggling in my prayer there appeared before my eyes a dreadful vision of the map of Japan which was covered with dark clouds of sin and grief. When this awful scene came before me, my heart began to ache for the millions of dying souls in my own country. Meanwhile, a small, brilliant star appeared in the sky above the city of Osaka. At that moment I felt very clearly the definite call of God to go to Osaka and I decided not to accept the fellowship.

XI

MY PARENTS CONVERTED

In August, 1918, when I arrived in San Francisco, a letter was awaiting me from a relative who told me that my father was very ill and asked me to come home as quickly as possible. On the 6th of September, when the three weeks' voyage was almost at an end and the dear, beautiful Mount Fuji appeared above the clouds, great joy filled my heart. As soon as the steamer anchored in the Yokohama harbor, a letter from home was delivered which said that my father was still alive. The next day I arrived at my dear home after thirteen years' absence. I found my mother unable to walk or to talk distinctly, as she had been suffering from paralysis for nearly five years, and my father was in a very critical condition.

According to a Japanese custom, kneeling and bowing, I said to him, "Father, I have now returned."

Then he replied, "Oh, I have waited for you so long."

Then I said, "Father, I am very sorry that I could not bring money home, but I have brought three diplomas." Holding these, he smiled. Then I continued, "Father, I have brought you a still better present, which is the best present not only for you but for all the people in Japan." Taking a Bible from my pocket I testified before my father and the relatives and friends who had assembled around his sick bed, telling them how God had saved me and kept me in the midst of difficulties, trials, temptations, sickness and poverty for so many years in the foreign land. My father was deeply impressed and said to me, "Son, I do not want a present. You have brought me indeed the best present." It was truly a glorious time and a great blessing came upon the

company, whose hearts were melted to tears.

About two o'clock on the third morning after my return, my father said to me, "I feel as if I cannot live until daybreak. If I die this morning, where will my soul go? Please tell me about a future life." It was indeed a sad but joyful time. I trusted that this was the hour when my prayers would be answered. I replied to him, "Father, repent of your sins before God and simply trust in Jesus Christ. Then, though you may die even now, you will go to heaven where some day we will meet you." He asked me, "Why is it so easy to go to heaven?" I then preached to him about the Cross of Calvary. His question was, "Did Jesus die for me? Does He love me so much?" While I was praying for the salvation of this struggling soul, God certainly came to him. With many tears he said to me, "I will believe in Jesus." My mother also wept and accepted Jesus. What a

glorious morning that was. Our little room was filled with the presence of God. Meanwhile my father was severely convulsed and finally his breath ceased and I thought the end had come, but after an hour had passed he began to breathe again and soon became able to speak.

My father urged me to go to Osaka and engage in the work to which God had called me. He lived four years after my return to Japan. Although one-half of his body was paralyzed and he suffered much physically, his soul was greatly blest and he was always happy. My mother lived nearly three years after father's death. When I was conducting a three days' campaign in a neighboring town, she desired to go to church to hear me preach. As she could not walk, we took her in a jinrikisha. It was one of the most joyful experiences of my life. My soul was greatly blest and the heavenly glory hovered over the whole congregation.

Soon after this my mother's long sickness of thirteen years came to an end. She was taken peacefully, without pain or suffering, into the glorious eternal home where my father was waiting for her. "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" (Rev. 21:4).

XII

MY WORK IN JAPAN

Being led by the vision of the star, I went to Osaka and have taken charge of our Theological Seminary for the past nine years. One of the most needy and important lines of work is to train native Christian workers. Although there are several well-equipped theological seminaries in Japan, most of them are losing the spiritual life and the evangelistic spirit, owing to the influence of so-called modernism. On the other hand, some Bible institutes are keeping the spiritual life, but have a tendency to ignore education. Our theological school in Osaka has a unique characteristic in that it keeps up the harmony between spirituality and intellectuality in the training of Christian ministers and Bible women. Only

students who have had a definite experience of salvation for two consecutive years and have a clear call of God for the ministry are admitted. The school is not only for the young people of our own church, but at present four other denominations are represented in the student body. The spiritual atmosphere is good. Many times the presence of the Holy Spirit has been manifested in our midst. On certain occasions we have been compelled to give up our recitations, and praying and praising have not ceased for from four to five hours in succession. At present we are carrying on a prayer meeting every morning at half-past five o'clock. The training given is not merely theological but is also very practical. The students are required to do practical work, assisting the pastors of our Osaka churches in prayer meetings, evangelistic services, Sunday-school work, and in calling on the people. This gives them practical experience in soul winning, which is

the object in view in all of our training. A few years ago the Lord gave us a beautiful campus in the residential and school district, away from the smoke and noise, and yet in the heart of the great city of Osaka. We now have seven buildings on the campus: the missionaries' home and the girls' dormitory, which were built a few years ago, and the administration building and the boys' dormitory which have just recently been completed. Besides these four main buildings, there are three Japanese houses which are used by Japanese teachers. A great work is awaiting us. Without doubt, this school in the near future is destined to be one of the most important holiness centers in Japan. By the grace of God I am fully determined to bury my life in this work to which God led me nine years ago by the vision of that bright star.

Besides my work in the school for four years I have taken charge of the Third Free Methodist Church of Osa-

ka. In this work I have been assisted by the students of the school. God has blest this church greatly. Four years ago there was no membership and at present we have a society numbering 130. The past year has been the best year in the history of the church. At a tent meeting recently held, God poured out His Spirit upon us. Several hundred people crowded in and around the tent, eagerly listening to the message of salvation. When the invitation was given, every night the altar was filled with sincere seekers. Our believers were greatly blest also, some of them receiving a definite experience of entire sanctification. Their prayers, praises and shouts reminded me of the great Pentecost. Some of the neighbors said in surprise, "We thought that Christians never drink wine, but this group must be different, for they seem to be drunken." Later on, when they found out the facts, they said, "No, they are not drunken, but how can they

be so happy without wine?" As a result of this tent meeting about thirty received baptism and were admitted into the church, among whom was a woman eighty-three years old.

In the work which I have been able to accomplish, I should not forget to give great credit to my faithful companion who has stood nobly for the cause of holiness and has been willing to make any sacrifice for the work of God. When I was hesitating about coming to the general conference this spring, she strongly encouraged me, saying that she had laid aside out of our meager support sufficient money to purchase a steerage ticket for me to cross the ocean. She said, "You must go to America at this time to thank all our American friends who have sacrificed so much for us and especially for our school recently, and to encourage them by telling them how much God is blessing our work in Japan." At the same time she said, "If God permits it

and opens the way, you had better stay there one year and make further preparation for the future of our school here." She said, "God will surely take care of me and these five little children, and we will wait patiently for your return." There is one incident which I must mention and that is that her baptism in Japan and my conversion in America took place on the same day of the same year, April 12, 1908, although we did not know each other until after my return to Japan nine years ago. Through her earnest prayers her parents had been saved and have been faithful members and officers of the Osaka First Church for many years. It was largely through her prayers and efforts that I was enabled to again come to America, and the Lord was better to us than we deserved, for additional funds were provided and it was not necessary for me to come steerage.

XIII

THE FREE METHODIST WORK IN JAPAN

Since the organization of the Japan Conference in 1923 by the assistance of Rev. W. B. Olmstead, the General Secretary of the Missionary Board, our Free Methodist work has made marked progress. In the great city of Osaka, the commercial center of the Orient, with a large population of more than two million people, there are now three churches besides the well-known First Church, the largest in our denomination, which is under the pastorate of Rev. T. Kawabe, one of the best known preachers in Japan. A few years ago a work was started in Wakayama, a city with nearly one hundred thousand population. These cities belong to the Osaka District. In Kobe,

one of the large cities of Japan, there are now two churches, both of which are quite promising. West of the city of Kobe, there are five churches and out-stations, the territory of which embraces a population of about a quarter of a million. Kobe and this territory are called the Banshu District. The third district, the Awaji Island, the birthplace of the Free Methodist Church in Japan, contains 210,000 people, for whom only our church is working.

During the past year all of these churches have been greatly prospered. During the year 250 converts received baptism, and the total gain in membership was 160. We have now sixteen churches with eighteen Japanese preachers and workers and eight missionaries. We are truly thankful to God for what He has done for us. But when we lift up our eyes, we see a wide, ripe field for Christian reaping. We need more workers and money to back

them. Let us pray more and sacrifice more, for we should not miss this wonderful opportunity to reap souls in Japan.

The following statement was made recently by the Missionary Secretary:

"Japan is not yet Christianized. We have assumed the responsibility of the evangelization of the heathen people in the territory assigned to us which embraces 1,500 square miles and which, according to the rules of missionary comity, no other denomination will enter. This is outside of the large cities in which all have an equal right to work. For a quarter of a century God has been giving us some wonderful spiritual victories, but the past has been largely a time of seed sowing. Now the fields are white for the harvest. In the name of our Lord, who gave His life for us and for them, and who told us to go and teach and disciple them, we should go forward with courage and faith."

XIV

THE HARVEST FIELD

Let us lift up our eyes and look on the harvest field of Japan, where the fields of grain are bending low and waiting for reapers.

Since the granting of the constitution in 1886, the Japanese government has passed through many bitter experiences and is becoming, year by year, more democratic, and closer international relations have given to the nation a universal idea. She is no longer an isolated Oriental feudal state, but is now a constitutional power in the world. Universal and democratic ideas have influenced the minds of the nation causing it to abandon a narrow policy even in religious affairs. Until 1873, throughout the entire country there were public notices announcing the prohibition of Christianity, but to-day the

attitude of the government is entirely changed, and Christianity is now recognized as one of the three chief religions in Japan.

. Not only politically but socially the way is open for Christianity. With the abolition of the feudal system in 1871 the barriers between the different classes of people were removed, and in 1873 about one million outcasts were elevated and became common people. Through Christian influences the position of woman has been greatly improved. Imperial recognition has been granted to several women who have done honorable service for their country.

Trade and commerce, so long despised as the occupation of only the lower classes of people, have hastened the establishment of railroads, steamships, telegraph and postal systems and prepared the way for the entrance of the gospel into every part of the country.

Education has also advanced rapidly. According to recent statistics, under the system of compulsory education, 98.2 per cent of the children are attending school. What a wonderful opportunity for Sunday-school work! In all the secondary schools the English language is one of the most important subjects required through the course of five years. This gives an ample opportunity for spreading the knowledge of the English Bible and Christian thought. Many noted authorities recognize religion as an important factor in education. Mr. Sawayanagi, ex-vice-minister of education, says, "Religious training is a very important thing, because it is religion that constitutes the foundation of spiritual life." That Christianity supplies this need is now realized in Japan. Although it was once expelled from the door of the public schools, we see at present the organization of the Young Men's Christian Association in almost all governmental

colleges and universities, and many of the leaders in the nation are Christians.

But while Christianity in Japan is going forward very hopefully, yet only a very small beginning has been made. The present Protestant church membership constitutes not more than one-fourth of one per cent of the population of the country. Thousands upon thousands of students are still wandering in the midst of the fearful strife of skepticism, agnosticism, materialism, atheism and other isms. Suffering in this miserable chaos, many useful young men and women have committed suicide, casting themselves into the waterfalls, into the craters of volcanoes, etc.

According to the records recently published we learn that the rate of suicides is increasing. "The most remarkable increase appears to be among men between the ages of 15 to 20, and there is also noted a very large increase among both sexes from the age of 20 to

30. The predominant cause assigned is agnosticism, which may perhaps be more accurately defined as philosophical pessimism."

Although there are in Japan nearly 75,000 Buddhist temples and more than 180,000 Buddhist priests, yet Buddhism has very little influence on the young people, and Shintoism has nothing spiritually to offer them. This rising tide of dissatisfaction with their old religions affords an opportune time to present the claims of Jesus Christ. According to recent statistics there are in Japan 1,253 foreign missionaries and 3,535 Japanese workers, including both educational and evangelistic. Of the Japanese workers, about one-third are women and 950 are ordained. The proportion between these workers and the entire population of Japan is one to fifteen thousand, while in the United States the proportion between the Protestant ministers and the population is one to six hundred. How can one

worker reach such a large number of people, 15,000! "Therefore said He unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He would send forth laborers into His harvest" (Luke 10:2).